

The Mystery of CHARLEY ROSS SOLVED

at Last.
By the Last of the Mosher's.

IN the Summer of 1874 Gilbert Mosher called upon Police Superintendent Walling, of the city of New York, at Police Headquarters, and supplied evidence which proved that the persons who had abducted Charley Ross were his brother, William Mosher, and Joseph Douglas. Before these men were captured, however, they were both killed in an attempted burglary at Bay Ridge, leaving the fate of the missing boy still unsolved. The last chapter in this strangest of modern romances is now made public for the first time through the statement to the Journal by Ellsworth Mosher, son of Gilbert Mosher, in which, now that Christian K. Ross is dead, he makes public the facts which his father had never divulged to the police, and settles once and for all the fate of Charley Ross.



LAST CHAPTER.

The House in New York Where He Was Killed and Where His Skeleton Was Found.

(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

THE mystery of lost Charley Ross is a mystery no longer. Ellsworth Mosher, nephew of William Mosher, the chief of the desperate gang that kidnapped the boy twenty-three years ago, and son of Gilbert Mosher, the thing's brother, who put the police on the kidnapper's trail, makes the statement that the stolen child died or was murdered in the house at No. 55 Grand street or the adjoining house on the corner of South Fifth avenue. In the basement of this house the wife of the criminal chief had a restaurant, and sixteen years ago workmen, in tearing out the old basement walls, found the skeleton of a boy.

That skeleton, Gilbert Mosher told his son, was all that was left of Charley Ross, and Ellsworth Mosher now for the first time discloses the statement.

William Mosher and his accomplice, Joseph Douglas, were killed during a burglary.

Gilbert Mosher is dead. Christian K. Ross, the father of the stolen child, who spent his fortune in the search for his boy, is also dead.

Ellsworth Mosher is an industrious laborer, an honest man, according to his employers and neighbors, who feels keenly the association of his family with the black crime, and who would rather talk of anything in the world than the stealing of Charley Ross and his death.

To understand the authority with which this man tears the veil from a mystery nearly a quarter of a century old it is necessary to recount some of the awful circumstances of the crime that was meant to be the first crime in a system of brigandage throughout the country.

The plans of the denials who stole and held the child for ransom were never fulfilled.

They neither gained the price they put upon his life nor the example by which they thought to terrorize other parents into paying unquestioningly for kidnapped children. The nation was spared the infliction of the horrid industry and the child-stealers were killed in committing another crime, but the sacrifice for the nation's immunity and the criminal's punishment were the life of the hazel-eyed, curly headed child, the dissipation of a fortune and the glooming to ruin of a once happy home.

This hideous end of the story might have been known years ago, if it could not have been averted, had the police heeded the advice of the undertaker whom the widow

of the arch criminal sought out and begged to take charge of the burial of her guilty husband and his fellow burglar and accomplice, Joseph Douglas, when the two were shot to death by those they sought to rob.

This undertaker was John Henry Munn, whose establishment is at No. 100 Avenue D.

He had years before worked in the shipyard on the East River with the Mosher's.

When the woman came to him Munn communicated with Police Superintendent Walling, and begged him to trace the woman, feeling sure she must lead them to where the stolen boy was hidden, but the police official paid more attention to her brother, William Westervelt. He was enraged at Westervelt, who had worked in with his relatives and the others of the gang while in the police pay to aid in their apprehension, and the woman slipped away. They convicted Westervelt of complicity in the kidnapping of Charley Ross, and sent him to prison for seven years. This was in 1875. Westervelt never admitted his guilt or betrayed the secrets of his mates. He might have bought liberty with the child could he have produced it. He did not, and the inference is that the child was dead and he must have confessed murder and not merely kidnapping, had he told the story.

Only on this hypothesis is it possible to adequately explain the silence of Westervelt during his imprisonment.

Charley Ross was stolen on July 1, 1874. He and his elder brother, Walter, were playing in the roadway near to his home in Washington lane, in Germantown, a quiet suburb of Philadelphia. Two men, seated in a buggy drawn by a single horse, drove leisurely along the lane. Ostensibly they were peddlers. They had become acquainted with the youngsters in their journeyings along the road, and had on several occasions given them candy. In response to a request for a drive and some more candy, the men in the carriage took the boys in with them and drove rapidly away.

Walter Ross was given a quarter of a dollar, and was set down to buy fireworks. When he had made his purchase he looked for the buggy. It was gone.

Charley Ross was never seen again by any member of the family, of which he was the idolized baby.

The buggy was an ordinary old-fashioned top affair, painted a dark color, with red stripes on each of its four wheels, and lined with blue cloth. The horse was a

A Queer Letter

One of the series of famous

—and probably

designedly im-

itate — letters

between the ab-

ductors and

Christian K. Ross

in the negotia-

tions for the

ransom of the

child.



CHARLEY ROSS
FROM PHOTO TAKEN 1874

Charley Ross at the Time He Was Kidnapped.
(From a photograph furnished the police in 1874.)

The Confession of the Last of the Mosher Family.

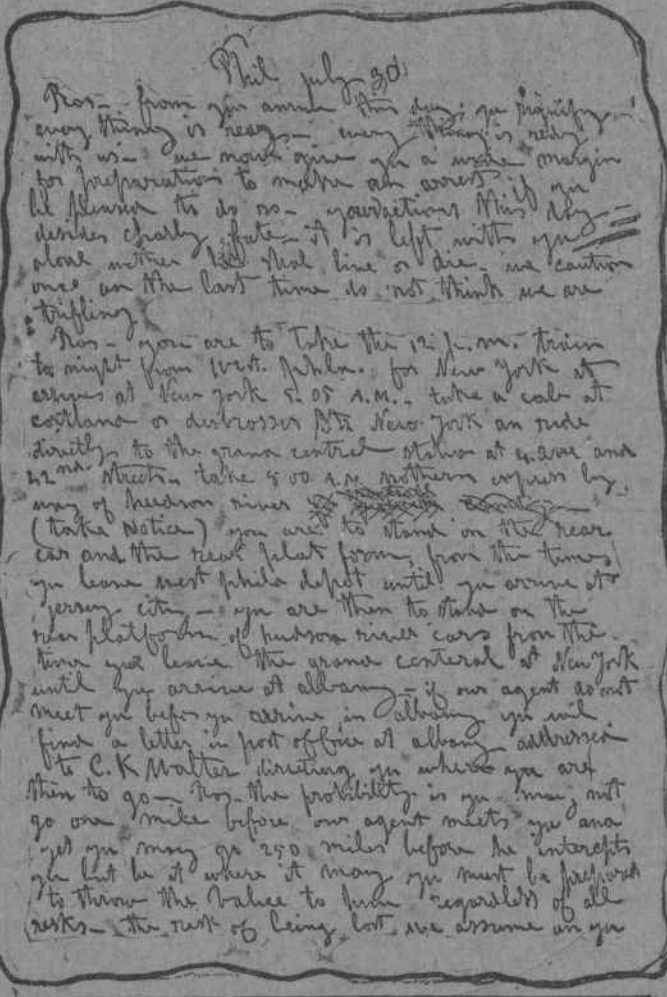
I HAVE read the following account of the abduction and fate of Charley Ross. It is absolutely correct in every particular, according to the statements made to me by my father, Gilbert Mosher, before his death. It will clear up the mystery of the stealing of Charley Ross and give for the first time the truth about the end of the unfortunate boy.
ELLSWORTH MOSHER.

medium sized dark bay or brown in color, with a white mark on the forehead. The harness was old and its silver mountings were well worn. No trace of this vehicle nor of the horse or the harness has ever been obtained from that day until this. Skilled detectives searched everywhere for it. Horse traders, stable keepers and wagon makers waited and watched for the outfit to appear somewhere, but it never did.

For three days the purpose of the kidnappers remained unknown. The police were notified, and the routine machinery of police search was put in operation. Three days after the child stealing, the lost boy's father received the first of a series of sixteen letters asking a ransom for the boy. Twenty thousand dollars was the price set, and he was told plainly that a failure to pay the price would result in the boy's murder.

They suggested various plans by which the money might be paid without endangering themselves. One of these was that Mr. Ross should ride on the rear platform of a train from Philadelphia to New York, and thence to Albany. At some point on the road a man by the track side would ring a bell and wave a flag, and at the signal Mr. Ross was to throw a satchel containing \$20,000 in bills, of not larger denomination than \$10. If the train did not stop and the agent with the bell and flag was not interfered with, the writers of the letters promised to return Charley Ross to his home within ten hours. That time they needed, they said, to make sure the bills were not marked.

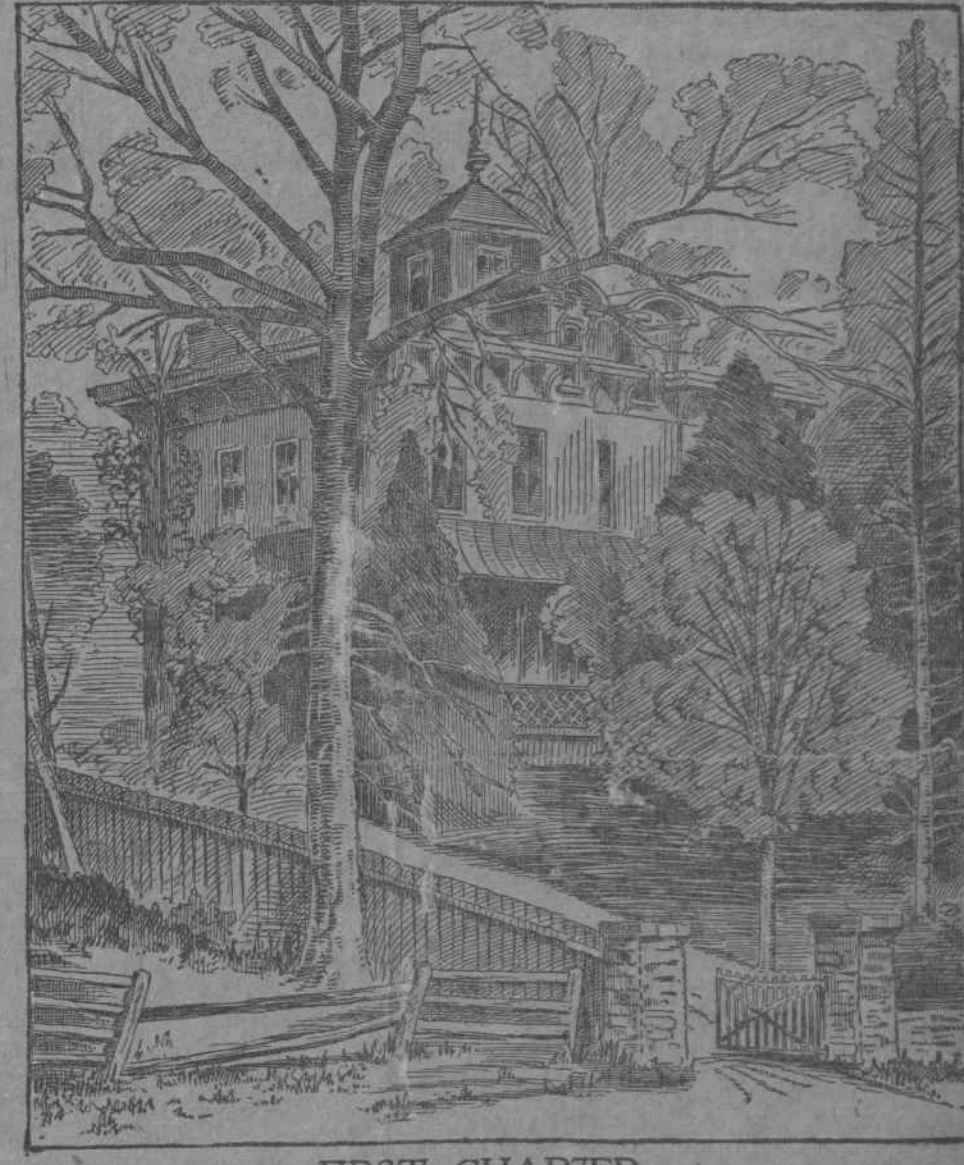
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REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER NUMBER TWELVE.

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FRST CHAPTER.

The House in Philadelphia Where Charley Ross Was Born and from Which He Was Kidnapped.

(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

Ros—from your

answer this day

you signify ev-

erything is redy

—every thing is

redy with us—

we now give you

a wide margin

for preparations

to make an ar-

rest if you decide

to do so—your

actions this day

desidss charly

fate—it is left

with you alone

wether he shal

live or die—we

caution once an

the last time do

not think we are

trifling.—From a

letter in the pos-

session of the

Ross family.

eration of Westervelt's acting as a stoic and bringing about the return of the stolen boy. Westervelt, like his father, was absolutely loyal to Mosher. He was willing to sacrifice Douglas, but was unable to do so and at the same time save his brother-in-law. So he deceived the head of the police force.

It was proved that on the night of December 12, 1874, Westervelt had interviewed with both Mosher and Douglas, right under the noses of the police in New York City. His sister was then the proprietress of a restaurant in the basement of the building at No. 55 Grand street. The basement of this building had been occupied by a shoemaker, and the upper floors were tenanted by a pawnbroker, partly for business and partly for residential purposes. But the fact that he was there was at then known to the police.

Westervelt kept Mosher informed of all police moves to the extent of his power, but the hunt was getting close when Mosher and Douglas were killed on the night of December 13, 1874.

The burglars had sailed to Bay Ridge to rob the untenanted house of J. Holmes Van Brunt, but the vacant house was fitted with burglar alarm wires communicating with the house of Judge Van Brunt, near by. J. Holmes Van Brunt and his son and two hired men responded to the alarm. The burglars tried to dash by them, firing from revolvers as they ran, but they hit nobody, and the return fire from the Van Brunts mortally wounded Douglas. A woman later Mosher, running away, got a bullet in the back and fell dead.

Douglas was revived with liquor, and when asked who he was, he told that death was but a few brief moments away, told his name, and that of his companion. When he was told that Mosher was dead he voluntarily declared that he and the other burglar had stolen Charley Ross from Germantown, but he asserted that he did not know where the boy was, as Mosher had taken charge of him and had never told of his hiding place. His last intelligent words were:

"The child will be returned safe, and sound within a few days."

He had spoken freely of himself to the men who watched his dying agonies, and had spelled Mosher's name on his letter by letter, adding:

"Mosher is married and lives in the city, but I have no home. I am a father man and have no relatives except a wife and sister."

So to save themselves the remnant of the kidnapper gang murdered the baby boy and hid his bones in the cellar, which I from the gallow.

When Mosher and Douglas, the bold spirits of the infamous gang, were gone, the frightened remainder, probably the woman and her brother, were left with the child on their hands. They did not dare restore him, for detection could hardly fail, and they were not bold enough to continue to look for the ransom money. Probably Westervelt, from his connection with the police, felt the blood money would never be paid.

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